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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE LITERARY NORM SYSTEMS OF GRADE 12 STUDENTS IN EDMONTON

by

Hangson B. Kazinga Msiska

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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Supervisor

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Date: 14th December, 1982

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my mother, Dairess Nyauhango and my father, Burnett Kazinga Msiska who first led me into the path of knowledge.

ABSTRACT

The dissertation investigated the literary tastes and norm-systems of grade 12 students who attend academic and "trades-oriented" schools in Edmonton, Canada. The investigation was conducted with the view that literature is a social institution constituted of the dialectical interrelationship amongst the domains of production, distribution and consumption.

The analysis of the data by statistical computations indicated that there are no differences in literary taste between the two types of schools. Even though there are some differences in the norm systems of the two types of schools the differences are not significant. It was also found out that the two sexes represented in the sample had the same literary taste and that their norm systems were not significantly different.

The dissertation also points to problems for future research.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	PRELIMINARIES: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING	1
	Statement of the problem	1
	Subproblems	1
	Hypotheses	1
	Delimitations	2
	Definition of terms	2
	Assumptions	3
	Significance of study	4
II	A REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE	6
	The Empirical Study of Literary Evaluation: A Historical Overview	6
	Curricular Approaches to the Study of Literary Evaluation: A Historical Overview	15
III	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	20
	The Concept of Literature	21
	The Concept of Literary Evaluation	32
IV	METHODOLOGY	45
	Statement of the Problem	46
	Design of the Study	47
	Instruments	47
	Subjects	49
	Procedure	49
	Data Analysis	51

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 53

Results 53

Discussion 78

VI CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES 88

Conclusions 88

Implications for Future Research 89

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY 91

APPENDIX 1 "The Secret in My Engagement Ring" .. 98

2 "Just Lather, That's All" 110

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Description	Page
1	Means of the two schools on story 1	53
2	Means of the two schools on story II	54
3.	Means of the two sexes on story I	54
4	Means of the two sexes on story II	54
5	T test results	54
6	Anova results	55
7	Correlation between Evaluation and Specific criterion for Scona	56
8	Correlation between evaluation and Specific criterion for Victoria	57
9	Correlation between evaluation and Specific criterion for males	58
10	Correlation between evaluation and Specific criterion for females	59
11	Correlation between evaluation and Specific criterion for whole sample	60
12	Criteria with negative correlation for Scona	61
13	Criteria with negative correlation for Victoria	61
14	Criteria with negative correlation for males	62
15	Criteria with negative correlation for females	62
16	Criteria with negative correlation for whole sample	63
17	Criteria with positive correlation for Scona	64
18	Criteria with positive correlation for Victoria	65

19	Criteria with positive correlation for males	66
20	Criteria with positive correlation for females	67
21	Criteria with positive correlation for whole sample	68
22	Criteria with strong correlation for Scona	69
23	Criteria with strong correlation for Victoria	70
24	Criteria with strong correlation for males	70
25	Criteria with strong correlation for females	71
26	Criteria with strong correlation for whole sample	72
27	Scona: Correlation between criteria and evaluation for both stories combined	73
28	Victoria: Correlation between criteria and evaluation for both stories combined	74
29	Males: Correlation between criteria and evaluation for both stories combined	75
30	Females: Correlation between criteria and evaluation for both stories combined	76
31	Whole sample: Correlation between criteria and evaluation for both stories combined	77

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Literature as a Social Institution.....	35

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARIES: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

The Statement of the Problem

This study proposes to identify and compare the literary norm-systems of grade 12 students of two types of school in Edmonton, an "academic" and a "trades-oriented" one.

The Subproblems

The first subproblem is to determine whether the literary norm-systems of the two groups of students have distinct characteristics, while the second subproblem is to compare the literary norm-systems of these two groups.

Hypotheses

The first hypothesis is that the two groups of students have identifiably distinct literary tastes.

The second hypothesis is that if the literary norms of the two groups of students are compared the literary norm-system of students from the "academic" type of school would be qualitatively different than that of students from a "trades-oriented" type of school.

Delimitations

a) The study will not attempt to correlate literary judgement with academic performance.

b) The study will not examine the psychological dimension of literary judgement.

c) The study will use only 44 students.

d) The study will use only grade 12 students.

e) The study will use only students without known physical or mental disabilities.

The Definition of Terms

Literary Evaluation - is not simply the act of classifying literary works into good and bad, beautiful and ugly, or complex and simple, but rather is the process by which the reader experiences a literary work. The experience of a literary text must not be confused with its interpretation. For the sake of clarifying the working definition of the term "literary evaluation" the following passage from N. Frye's article, "Context of literary evaluation", will be adduced:

> The experience of literature is not criticism, just as religious experience is not theology and mental experience is not psychology. In the experience of literature a great many things are felt, and can be said, which have no functional role to play in criticism. A student of literature may be aware of many things that he need not say as a critic,...[1]

Thus understood, the term "literary evaluation" will be used, in this study, interchangeably with terms such as "literary preference", "literary appreciation", "literary response" and "literary experience."

Literary Norm-system - is a set of criteria that a reader uses in evaluating a literary work.[2]

Indiana Literary Judgement Test - is the study R.T. Segers conducted at the Universities of Indiana and Yale.[3]

Academic School - any school whose curricular emphasis is on pure sciences and arts. This kind of school prepares students for entry into university.

Trades-oriented Schools - any school whose curricular emphasis is on technical subjects such as "hair dressing" and "motor vehicle mechanics". This kind of school prepares students for entry into specific job markets.

Assumptions

The first assumption is that literary value judgements are amenable to empirical investigation.

The second assumption is that the general philosophy behind a school curriculum has an influence on the quality of aesthetic education.

The third assumption is that literary norm-systems of groups of readers can be compared and contrasted on the basis of their quality.

The Significance of the Study

This study will give us an insight into the question of whether or not all high school students in Edmonton have an equal amount of access to the literary values of our time. It is also hoped that this study will provide us with a picture of the state of literary education in Edmonton. Furthermore, this study will be a modest contribution to the empirical study of literary judgement. Since there are very few empirical studies of literary judgement, any effort in this direction is worthwhile.

NOTES

[1] N. Frye, "Context of Literary Evaluation." in Problems of Literary Evaluation. ed. J. Strelka (University Park & London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1969), p.18.

[2] This term is used here in the same sense R.T. Segers uses it in the following work: R.T. Segers, The Evaluation of Literary Texts: An Experimental Investigation into Rationalizations of Value Judgements with Reference to Semiotics and Esthetics of Reception Studies in Semiotics, Vol. 22., (Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press, 1978), pp. 62-68.

[3] Segers, Op. Cit.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The Empirical Study of Literary Evaluation: A Historical Overview

The history of the empirical study of literary evaluation can be traced back to the beginnings of experimental psychology. G.T. Fechner, who is considered the founder of experimental psychology, was fascinated by the general questions of aesthetic preference. In 1876, Fechner published the results of his research into the affective preferences of people.[1] Fechner sought to deduce the actual preferences of his subjects from their preferences for simple and abstract elements such as rectangles and vowel sounds. This approach to the study of aesthetic preference was actively pursued by scholars of aesthetics in both Europe and America during the early part of the Twentieth Century.[2] Nevertheless, the approach did elicit a lot of criticism from both its admirers and detractors. Perhaps, the most fair assessment of Fechner's methodology is that by E. Bullough. Bullough, who was himself an ardent believer in experimental aesthetics, had this to say about the work of the founder of experimental aesthetics:

> Fechner's experiments cannot be said to have yielded any very striking or illuminating positive results. The reasons of their failure are well

> known and are set out in every criticism, such as can be found in the above-mentioned work of Lalo. The purely quantitative measurements, and the system of averages which he employed, were the direct consequences of the hedonistic principles on which he based his theory of Aesthetics in general. The search for the colour which the greatest number of persons prefer, the questions whether squares or oblongs are more generally liked, or what proportions of the arms of a cross meet with the widest approval, seem to us rather crude and naive. But posterity owes a great debt of gratitude to Fechner for having attacked these kinds of problems, even if the results showed that little progress could be hoped for in that direction.[3]

Notwithstanding his methodological errors, Fechner's greatest contribution to posterity lies in the fact that he was the first aesthetician to have involved the physical presence of people in the study of aesthetic experience. Before Fechner's study most of the studies of aesthetic experience were purely speculative and none of them had ever used the aesthetic experience of a subject as a point of departure for its theoretical formulations. Thus, even though Fechner did not explicitly deal with literary preference, he can still be looked upon as the man whose courage to take the whole study of aesthetics into the empirical realm has been a source of inspiration for the student of empirical literary appreciation.

Like most methodological approaches, Fechner's basic attitude was kept while at the same time giving rise to other approaches. The most notable off-shoot of Fechner's approach was a group of Einfuhlüngen - or Empathy-theories which reached their zenith between 1895 and 1905. The proponents of this methodology sought to deduce the general norms of aesthetic experience from their own introspective experience of aesthetic objects. They were preoccupied with the apprehension of the artist's Expression. Some of the scholars who indulged in these introspective exercises were V. Lee, A. Thompson and T. Lipps.[4] The experiments carried out within the framework of the Einfuhlüngen-theories did accentuate the idiosyncracies of the aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience cannot be adequately explained by generalizing from the experience of one individual. A more meaningful approach would have been one that took into account the experiences of many people. In all fairness it must, however, be added that the naivety of the underlying assumptions of the Einfuhlüngen-theories must be understood in the context of the general level of empirical aesthetics' research of the time.

Subsequent to the rise of Einfuhlüngen-theories, and under the influence of trends in general psychology, a number of attempts at standardizing the measurement of aesthetic experience were made. It was at this stage in the history of the empirical study of aesthetic experience that

literary preference was addressed to as a specific area of inquiry. Of note are the researches of H. Carroll, and A. Abbott et. al. Carroll devised a number of tests for the measurement of prose appreciation in school students.[5] The Carroll Prose Appreciation Test depended "for its validity upon two criteria: first, source; second, expert opinion." Carroll defended his criteria by saying that:

> The assumption is made that a selection, representative of the art of Sigrid Undset, would be superior to a typical selection from a woodpulp magazine, or that a description from Tolstoi could easily be distinguished from one badly written by deliberate intent. To be sure, the passages are short; but a reader can, even in a few lines, discover an incorrectly used word, an inartistic combination of phrases, or a faulty selection of detail. If only a single note is flatted by a singer, the musician hears it; "errors," if they may be called such, in prose are not so noticeable, but is at least possible to make gross discriminations.[6]

With due credit to Carroll, there are, nevertheless, two significant errors that he commits in choosing his criteria. First of all, Carroll is wrong in assuming that one's preference for an excerpt of literary text necessarily means that one likes the whole work of which the excerpt is a part. An excerpt of a whole is not aesthetically equivilent to the whole. In other words an excerpt from Tolstoi's Anna Karenina, is not aesthetically equivalent to the aesthetic object known as Anna Karenina. Thus, a reader's judgement of the excerpt from the aforementioned novel is not representative of his

overall impression of the whole novel.[7]

Secondly, Carroll's assumption that expert value judgements are necessarily the best is uncritical. Expert value judgements simply reflect the conventional norms of the period during which the given experts participate in the literary life of a society.[8] It is also true that most of the time the expert opinion is highly influenced by the kind of literary school of thought to which the respective expert subscribes. For example, a work that is considered good by an existentialist literary scholar might be differently valued by a structuralist. However, in saying all this one is not denigrating the opinions of literary experts; all that one is saying is that the experts'opinion should be used cautiously in constructing tests.

It might also be added that Carroll's conclusions were refuted by the findings of the research conducted by D. Schubert. Schubert had replicated The Carroll Prose Appreciation Test on retarded and superior readers. To his surprise, his findings were different from those that were obtained by Carroll.[9]

Like Carroll, Abbott and Trabue used the opinions of the literary experts uncritically in the construction of a standardized test for the measurement of students' appreciation of poetry. Nevertheless, unlike Carroll they did use whole works in the tasks presented to the subjects.

The educational psychologist's preoccupation with the idea of constructing timeless standardized tests for the measurement of literary appreciation has been decried by many scholars. This methodological approach has been criticized for its over-emphasis on statistical manipulations, and for creating the impression that the only valid empirical approach to the study of literary appreciation is one that relies heavily on statistical analysis.[10] While statistics can be an invaluable tool for the analysis of the literary experience, if used carefully, the use of it for the mere reason of appearing to be scientific, can lead to very naive and contrived conclusions.

Subsequent to the era in which the educational approach was in vogue, a trickling of empirical research inspired by reception aesthetics began to appear.[11] These empirical analyses of literary evaluation were a logical development of the central place that the reader occupied in the theoretical framework of reception aesthetics. The basic assumption of reception aesthetics is that literature is written to be read and, as such, the best way of explicating literature is by investigating the interaction between the literary text and the reader. This position, however, is not new in literary theory. In 1923, L.L. Schucking did expound a similar theoretical position. In his book, Soziologie der Literarischen Geschmacksbildung, Schucking assigned paramount significance to the explication of

literary taste in terms of the dynamic interaction of the taste of the various groups of a society.[12] The role of the reader in literary life was furthermore given prominence in R. Escarpit's Sociologie de la litterature - a work in which some of the modes of literary consumption were presented.[13] However, it is with the advent of reception aesthetics that metatheory is grafted to the empirical study of the reader's reception of the literary text.

A case example of empirical reception studies is that by E. Frey. Frey set out to determine the role of literary training and linguistic competence in the process of literary evaluation. He administered excerpts of texts to a number of subjects. The investigation showed that language competence and literary training do, in fact, influence the quality of reader reactions and judgements. The research indicated also that consensus about the aesthetic quality of a text increases among people of a similar literary environment. One implication of Frey's conclusions is that there exists a shared set of literary criteria amongst people who participate in a common literary life. Another implication of Frey's deductions is that the set of literary criteria of a society can only be acquired through literary training. Interesting as Frey's findings might be, one cannot overlook the fact that he did use literary excerpts instead of whole works. Conclusions made on the basis of the readers' responses to distorted

aesthetic objects cannot be received without a grain of salt.

In a study by W. Bauer et al. an analysis of the affective elements of Paul Celan's short poem, "Fadensonnen" was performed by administering a questionnaire to a total of 665 readers.[15] The aim of the first part of the questionnaire was to find out the expectation - horizon of the readers, while the second part sought to capture the readers' spontaneous response to the poem. Amongst other things, this team of scholars discerned three main lines of interpretation amongst the readers. The reader's choice of any of these appeared not to be accidental, but correlated to psychological associations produced by him. These findings do confirm the fact that in spite of differences of literary judgement amongst readers there exists a shared set of literary values to which their divergent judgements can be reduced.

Empirical reception studies have inspired other approaches to the analysis of aesthetic evaluation, most notably the semiotic analysis of literary evaluation done by R.T. Segers.[16] Segers' theoretical paradigm has as its point of departure the main tenets of reception aesthetics, but his study is more than a mere extension of reception aesthetics; it is an ambitious attempt at integrating reception aesthetics with semiotics for the purpose

of devising an adequate model for the analysis of literary evaluation. Segers' aim was to determine the system of norms that students of literature use in evaluating literary texts. He carried out his research on students and professors of literature at the Universities of Indianna and Yale. The results of the research indicated that the readers investigated shared a common norm-system which was characterized by three factors, i.e, novelty, design, and impact. The first fctor comprises the criteria of language, originality, excitement, and interest. The second factor comprises the criteria of plot, theme, and structure. The third factor comprises the items of emotion, believability, characterization, involvement and tempo.[17] Of these three factors, the novelty factor was found to be the most important, followed by the two other factors which have equal significance. Seger's work is perhaps the single most important work on the subjct of literary evaluation. For a theoretical framework Segers utilises such relevant theories as reception aesthetics, communication theory, semiotics, Prague structuralism, and value theory. In terms of methodology, Segers borrows and improves upon some methodologies of the Social Sciences, and creates a whole new methodology uniquely adapted to the study of the phenomenon of literary evaluation.

Having emerged initially as part and parcel of general empirical aesthetics, the study of literary evaluation is slowly isolating its own problems from the morass of the preoccupations of general aesthetics. Nevertheless, as important as the task of attempting to provide solutions to problems, is the question of grounding the studies of literary evaluation in theoretical structures which stand on the cumulative contribution of literary theory as well as on the theoretical ideas advanced by such disciplines as value theory and educational psychology.

Curricular Approaches to the Study of Literary Evaluation: A Historical Overview

Perhaps, the earliest investigation of the relationship between curriculum and literary judgement is the one published by E. Smith, and R. Tyler in 1942. The study was undertaken to determine whether or not the so called "progressive education" had had an influence on the students' aesthetic attitudes and interests. The study employed three appreciation questionnaires: the novel questionnaire the drama questionnaire, and the questionnaire on voluntary reading.[18] However, the aim of the project was not so much to investigate the constituents of the norm-systems of the student, but rather to measure the effectiveness of a particular teaching methodology. Since the publication

of this study, a number of curricular studies pertaining to literary evaluation have been undertaken; however, most of these studies, with the exception of one, focus on what the teacher does in the teaching of literature, rather than on the nature of the literary norms of the students.

The exception to the rule mentioned above is R.E. Tylor's work of 1962.[19] She set out to compare the effect of literary courses and that of topical courses on the quality of literary interpretation, reading comprehension, and literary appreciation. The study showed "that high school literary type courses produced higher scores in literary interpretation than did topical courses, but no significant difference in reading comprehension or literary appreciation (taste)."[20] The above mentioned experiment is of great relevance to the present study in so far as it asks almost the same question as one of the two questions asked by this study i.e.: are there differences in the degree to which different types of curicula facilitate the acquisition of literary values? It is in an attempt to answer this question that a comparative investigation of the literary norm-systems engendered by two differing curricular will be undertaken.

However, before discussing issues pertaining to

methodology and the analysis of data, a theoretical rationale in the spirit of which this study was carried out will be presented.

NOTES

[1] G.T. Fechner, Vorschule der Ästhetik (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Hartel, 1876).

[2] E. Bullough, "Recent Work in Experimental Aesthetics," British Journal of Psychology, 12 (1921), 76-77.

[3] Ibid., p. 77.

[4] Ibid., pp. 76-79.

[5] H. Carroll, "A Standardized Test of Prose Appreciation for Senior High School Pupils," Journal of Educational Psychology, 23 (1932), 402-403.

[6] Ibid., pp. 402-403.

[7] This position is corroborated by that of T. Munro - see T. Munro, Toward Science in Aesthetics: Selected Essays, (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1956), p.53.

[8] A.C. Purves and R. Beach, Literature and the Reader (Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1972), p.7.

[9] Ibid., p. 10.

[10] Ibid., p.7.

[11] Most of the early empirico-analytical reception studies were done in West Germany.

[12] L.L. Schucking, Soziologie der literarischen Geschmacksbildung (Bern and Munich: Francke, 1923).

[13] R. Escarpit, Sociologie de la Litterature, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958).

[14] E. Frey, "What is Good Style? Reader Reactions to German Text Samples," Modern Language Journal, 56 (1972), 310-23.

[15] W. Bauer et al., Text und Rezeption: Wirkunganalyse Zeitgenössischer Lyrik am Beispiel des Gedichtes 'Fadensonnen' von Paul Celan (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1972).

[16] R.T. Segers, The Evaluation of Literary Texts (Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press, 1978).

[17] Ibid., pp. 145-146.

[18]Purves et al., Op. Cit., pp. 152-53.

[19]R.E. Tylor, "A Comparison of the outcome of Two instructional Arrangements in High School Literature: The Topical Unit and the Literary Types," Diss. Indiana University, 1962.

[20]This is a paraphrase from Purves et al. Op. Cit., p. 153.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the present chapter, the theoretical framework under whose rubrics the empirical study has been conducted will be elaborated. The need for grounding empirical studies of literature on explicit theoretical foundations has been voiced by a number of scholars, including R.T. Segers and S.J. Schmidt.[1] The elucidation of one's theoretical point of departure, highlights the underlying assumptions and the specific field of enquiry of a study. Even the very aim of the enquiry gets clarified by such an endeavor. This kind of clarity must be sought if the empirical study of literature is to achieve the status of what Schmidt calls "a rational science."[2]

For the purposes of this study, two theoretical issues are of paramount significance; the concept of "literature" and the concept of "literary evaluation." The main sources of the theoretical position taken in this study are as follows: sociology, the sociology of literature, reception aesthetics, semiotics, communication theory, information theory and axiology.

THE CONCEPT OF LITERATURE

On first thought, a discussion of the concept of literature might seem a superficial exercise in theoretical gymnastics; however, when one considers the fact that the term "literature" does not mean the same thing to everyone, one might appreciate an explanation of the sense in which the word is used in the present study. Maria Corti's comment on the problematic nature of the term "literature" might further elucidate what is being said here:

> In every study, the vantage point from which the object of that study is considered is the operative choice of the critic. That choice makes certain forms of enquiry more pertinent than others, which would be valid from another perspective. This statement, however, is less self-evident than it seems, because no object of study is clear from the beginning; it becomes so only gradually, as one passes to various levels of inquiry. Take, for example, the notion of literature which is in daily use, but is thorny as a mountain thistle. If in 1947 Sartre's question "what is literature?" seemed insidious, the question posed by Todorov at the first Congress of the I.A.S.S. (1974) was even more so: "Does literature exist?" Someone is actually casting doubt on the object, as if we were dealing with a collective ghost from which it would be opportune to liberate ourselves. Another critic, Zamjatin, who is also a writer, does not doubt the object but rather the possibility of describing it: there is an Indian fable, he says, in which "some blind people were asked to feel an

> elephant and describe what it seemed to resemble." One felt an ear and said; a rope. Another felt a hoof and said: a smooth column. A third felt the trunk and said; a sausage. Moral: "This is the destiny of the majority of critics. Literature is too vast a fact to be embraced in its totality."[3]

It is thus, imperative that one provide the sense in which one is using the term literature. However, in adopting a definition of literature one must avoid the kind of extreme subjectivity that is evident in the descriptions of the elephant which the blind men provided. One must take into account the relevant views of others in arriving at a definition of an object.

Taking into account the postulations of sociology, semiotics, sociology of literature, reception aesthetics, communication theory and information theory, the term "literature" will be understood as a social institution which is constituted by the dialectical process of production, reproduction, distribution and consumption of texts which have been socially designated and accepted as possessing some literary value.

Of course, the view that literature is a social institution is not new in literary scholarship; scholars such as S.J. Schmidt have belaboured this point before. Nevertheless, the criteria upon which literature is often accorded the status of a social institution are conceived

haphazardly. For example, Schmidt's view that literature is a social institution because it is a subset of social communication in general, merely describes a feature that literature holds in common with other social institutions.[4] Moreover, this criterion is not one of the sufficient conditions which a social phenomenon must satisfy in order to qualify as a social institution. In dealing with questions regarding the sociological status of literature in the context of the social system, literary scholars would do better by consulting the criteria advanced by sociologists. This is necessary because to name literature "a social institution." is necessarily to put literature on par with the rest of the social institutions which exist in society.

In the present study, the status of literature as a social institution is justified on the basis of two criteria advanced by sociologists. The first criterion, advanced by G. Ferraro and B. Larkin, defines a social institution as "an established custom or practice found in human societies."[5] On the basis of this criterion literature qualifies for the status of a "social institution." Literature is, indeed, one of the most established customs or practices of human society. It is present in all forms of human societies, regardless of the differences in social organization; and level of economic development.

Secondly, literature can be considered a social institution on the basis of the "interactionistic" theory of social institutions. The criteria advanced by this approach are best summarized by R. Rowbottom in his work, Social Analysis, in which he defines social institutions as "all those general aspects of the interactions in any society, large or small, which endure beyond changes in individual membership."[6] The fact that literature is characterized by kinds of interaction which endure beyond changes in individual membership cannot be gainsaid. If for example, the triad: Author, Text and Reader, is taken as a representation of the basic constituents of the struture of literature, various forms of intra-institutional interaction can be noted and described. While the specific modes of interaction amongst these elements are always debatable, the fact still remains that there are within literature, enduring elements which are in a process of constant interaction, and which therefore define it as an institution on the basis of the "interactionistic" criteria.

Social institutions, are usually seen as responses to particular human needs. Ferraro and Larkin, for example, have provided the following set of five human needs and the corresponding social institutions to which they give rise:

a) the need for food and protection (economic institution)

b) the need to continue society (family institutions)

c) the need to continue traditions, customs, values (educational institutions)

d) the need for order in the society (political institutions)

e) the need for religion (religious institutions)[7]

If it were a question of fitting the literary institution into the above model, one would fit it within the educational institution. Through literature, so it could be said, man does perpetuate his traditions, customs and values. Nevertheless, there is a lot of literature that does not cater to man's need to continue his traditions, customs, and values. There are texts that do not, at least explicitly, inform us of the social contexts within which they were produced.

Such texts are more significant for their aesthetic stature rather than for their capability to inform about society. One can accordingly argue that the human need in response to which the institution of literature arises is missing from the model provided by Ferraro and Larkin. The sixth human need to which literature caters can be called, in general terms, "the aesthetic need."

The "aesthetic need" can be defined as the need to produce and consume objects which are products of man's imagination, translated into linguistic and musical signs,

as well as into other materials such as clay, paint and canvas.

Turning to the second aspect of the definition of literature as a social institution, one notices, at once, that the elements: production, distribution and consumption do, in fact, delineate the main domains of social activity engaged in by those who participate in the institution of literature. Even though these categories are primarily used, by Marx and his followers, in reference to the working of the economic institution, they, nevertheless, serve the analysis of the institution of literature well by reducing the activities which obtain in literature to their bare basics. M. Nauman has succinctly summarized the dialectical relationship between literary production and consumption, in the following words:

> Production produces consumption insofar as it creates (a) the material, the object to be consumed; (b) by way of the object which is always a definite one, the manner of consumption; (c) the need for consumption, the urge to it, "the ability to consume," and thus a subject for the object. Marx gives as an example: "The object of art, as well as any other product, creates an artistic public, appreciative of beauty."
>
> But conversely, consumption also produces production, and does so inasmuch as it creates (a) the real product, for unlike a natural object, the object created by man only becomes a product when it has proved

> itself to be such in consumption: "the result of production is a product, not as the material embodiment of activity but only as an object for the active subject" (p.25); consumption creates (b) the need for new production, "the ideal, inwards, impelling cause which constitutes the prerequisite of production" (ibid), and thus "the disposition of the producer" (p.26): It is clear that while production furnishes the material object of consumption, consumption provides the ideal object of production, as its image, its want, its impulse and its purpose." (p.25)[8]

However, mediating between production and consumption is the sphere of distribution of goods. As Nauman describes it, this sphere "determines the individual's share in the world of products."[9] Nevertheless, that which is produced, and distributed for consumption is not without function in the network of activities which take place in the institution of literature. The literary product does exert pressure on the manner of production as well as that of consumption. For example a "tragedy" does demand a particular mode of production, distribution and consumption. The author of a "tragedy" must produce it according to a certain set of rules and conventions that govern the production of a "tragedy." The distribution of a tragedy by ink and paper may not be enough since the full value of a tragedy may only be given justice to, by a theatre. A tragedy also imposes certain rules of consumption on the part of the reader or audience. Thus,

the literary product is more than a lifeless object on a conveyor belt. The literary product dynamically participates in the interplay amongst various functionaries of the institution of literature.

All the same, one must admit that ultimately a product is assigned literary value not so much on the basis of its intrinsic aspects but rather on the basis of how it is used. One could say, with J. Mukarovsky, that "there are no objects or actions which, by virtue of their essence or organization would, regardless of time, place or the person evaluating them, possess an aesthetic function and others which, again by their very nature, would be necessarily immune to the aesthetic function."[10]

However, Mukarovsky has taken into account, as well, a very important feature of the literary product. In the following passage Mukarovsky recognizes the fact that some products have a higher tendency towards being aesthetic than others.

> But there are certain pre-conditions in the objective arrangement of an object (which bears the aesthetic function) which facilitates the rise of aesthetic pleasure.[11]

Thus, the aesthetic value of a literary product is a function of both the aesthetic predisposition inherent in the object itself and the manner in which the object is perceived and used by the society. However, the final arbiter in matters involving the aesthetic status of products is society.

One may also take note of the fact that once the definition of literature provided in this study is taken seriously, atomistic definitions of literature appear inadequate. Thus definitions of literature which confine themselves to production, such as the romantic definition of literature, can be seen to be excluding a lot that goes into constituting the institution of literature.[12] The same could be said about the definitions of literature provided by Formalism and New Critical theory whose view of literature centers primarily on the formal and stylistic properties of the literary text. Even attempts at transcending the traditional concepts of literature have, sometimes, given a very slanted view of literature. In reception aesthetics, for example, one comes across definitions of literature which are based solely on the role the reader plays in the literary structure. Though such definitions can be justified on the grounds that they force the practice of literary theory to recognize the significance of the reader in the dynamics of literary processes - a fact neglected by mainstream literary theory for a long time - one must be on one's guard for an equally significant error which reader-oriented definitions commit when they assume that the total meaning of the phenomenon of literature can be adequately explicated in terms of the nature and pattern of the reader's consumption of the literary text.

Furthermore, the institutional view of literature does show that those theories of literature which are reconsiderations of the traditional views of literature (ie. reception and communication theories) are related to one another by virtue of the fact that they all focus on different features of the institution of literature. We shall conclude our survey of current institutional models of literature with a presentation of two communicative/information models; those of R.J. Jacobson and U. Eco.

Basic to Jakobson's model is the triad: "sender," "message", and "addressee." Mediating between the "sender" and the "addressee" are the factors of: "context" of the message, and kinds of "contacts" available between the sender and the addressed. In dealing with a reader's evaluation of a text it is important to be conscious of the kind of contact that exists between him and the author, since author-reader contacts can influence the mode of text-processing and consequently that of text-evaluation. It is also imperative that the reader be aware of the context within which the message he is asked to receive has been sent. The context includes, such aspects of literary communication as generic codes and period codes. Any misunderstanding regarding such codes on the part of the reader can lead to wrong modes of text-consumption.

Related to studies which examine the communicational properties of literature, are those studies that ask specifically about the information aspect of the institution

of literature. These studies seek to understand the manner in which the information structure of the institution of literature functions. U. Eco's model provides an example of the main orientation of the information approach to the study of literature.[13] The poles of Eco's model are the "source" and the "destination." The source generates and "encodes" a message and converts it into signals which, in turn, are transmitted through a "channel." The signals are, however, received and decoded back into a message at the point of destination. Translated into the literary information structure, the "source" is often seen as representing the author who encodes his message by remodelling signals of natural language. The channel through which the author's message gets transmitted to the reader is the printed page. On receiving the signals, the reader is required by convention to decode them by using the literary code. The whole concept of codes becomes problematic when applied to literature since literary communication, by its very nature, is polysemic. Without giving the message/text a privileged status, one can concur with R. Ingarden and W. Iser that, imbedded in the message, are certain "indeterminate" points which instruct the reader about the appropriate code he can use in processing the message or text.[14] Whether or not the real readers do in fact, process literary texts in this manner cannot be answered without recourse to empirical research. It

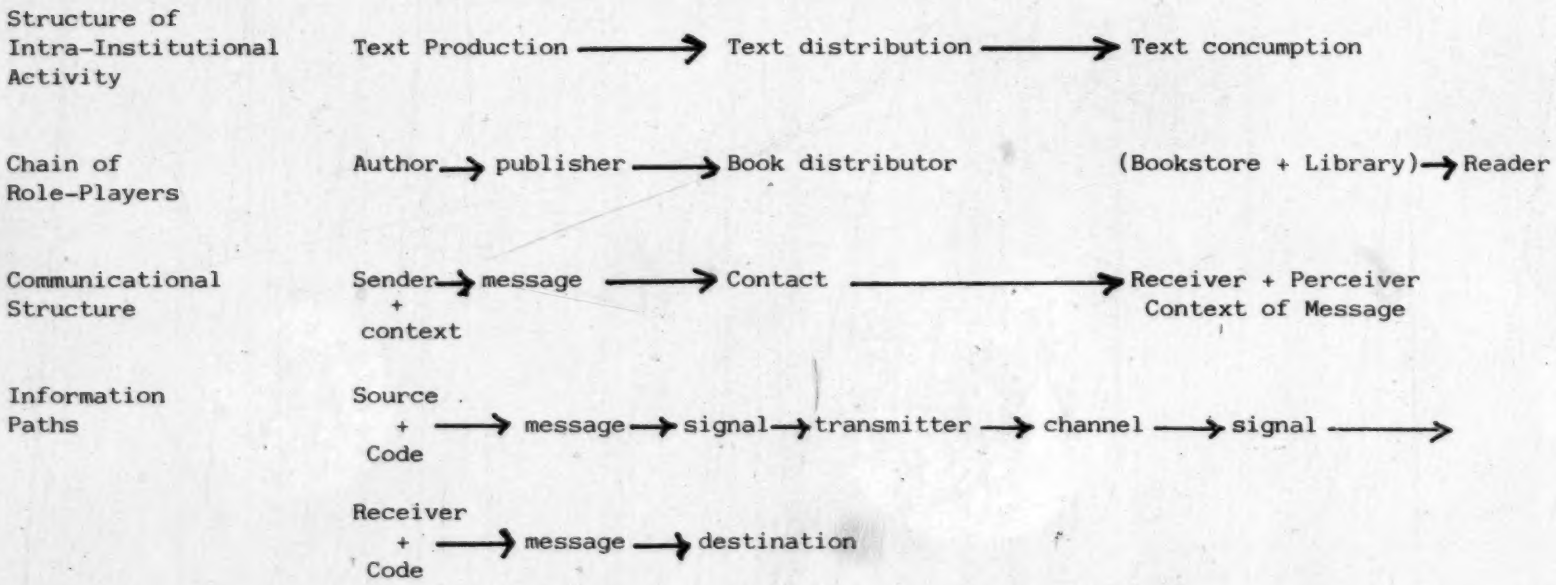
is in order to grasp the way real readers process literary texts that the present empirical study into the problem of literary evaluation has been undertaken.

However, there was need to clarify the notion of literature being employed in this study. The notion of literature in the framework of which the present study has been carried out is that literature is a social institution amongst other social institutions. As a social institution, literature possesses a multitude of properties each one of which forms a fertile field of inquiry (on the following page is Figure 1 which is a skeletal presentation of some of these inquiries in terms of the theory of literature as a social institution).[15] The basic field of inquiry to which the present study is addressing itself is located on the activity structure of the literary institution. Well aware of the dialectical relationship between the various components of the literary activity-structure, the present study focusses on the problem of literary evaluation which is an aspect of the domain of text-consumption.

THE CONCEPT OF LITERARY EVALUATION

Literary evaluation exists within a matrix of activities in the domain of text-consumption. In the context of L.M. Rosenblatt's transactional view of literature, one can map out three cardinal activities which take place during text-consumption: reading, interpretation, and evaluation.[16] Nevertheless, these areas of activity must

LITERATURE AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION



not be understood as being neatly delineated from one another - they exist in an active continuum within which they inter-penetrate.

The primary confrontation is between a human reader with all his socially and personally acquired idiosyncrasies, and "a set or series of signs interpretable as linguistic symbols."[17] This set of signs with a capacity to serve as symbols is referred to by Rosenblatt as "the text." Furthermore, she locates the transaction between the reader and the text on the level of reading.

In contradistinction to the concept of text, according to Rosenblatt, is the concept of "Poem" which she defines as follows:

> The poem, then must be thought of as an event in time. It is not an object or an ideal entity. It happens during a coming-together, a compenetration, of a reader and a text. The reader brings to the text his past experience and present personality. Under the magnitude of the ordered symbols of the text, he marshalls his resources and crystallizes out of the stuff of memory, thought and feeling a new order, experience, which he sees as the poem. This becomes part of the ongoing stream of his life experience, to be reflected on from any angle important to him as a human being.[18]

Though a reader may turn after evoking the poem, he will still have participated in some minimal measure of interpretation. Interpretation and evaluation are part and parcel of the "aesthetic" reading of the text except

that they do not occupy a dominant position during the reading phase. The reader's attention during the reading phase of the text is centered more on decoding the linguistic signals and evoking from them the poem.

Once the poem has been evoked, the reader reflects on his experience. The act of glancing backward at the transaction between the reader and the literary work is the essence of the idea of interpretation. One could not describe this act better than the way Rosenblatt does in the following passage:

> Sometimes the backward glance simply registers a sense of having organized and completed a sequence of experiences, of having reached a conclusion. Sometimes one is drawn into reflecting on what has been evoked in the effort to realize it more keenly, to arrive at a tighter organization, a firmer knitting-together of elements. For instance, one may search for a more satisfactory underlying connection among the various speeches or actions of a character in a novel or play.[19]

If the phenomenon of interpretation is understood in terms of the transactional relationship between the reader and the text, it can be granted to both the ordinary reader and the critic. Both the critic and the ordinary reader engage in interpretation with the sole difference that the critic has more tools for organizing his experience than the ordinary reader. The critic also has the social mandate of translating his experience with a text into a professional code, one that the ordinary reader may not

have access to unless he has had the privilege of being exposed to it through such institutions as the educational institution. Thus, Rosenblatt is correct in describing the ordinary reader as an "embryonic critic."[20]

Once the reader has evoked the poem and assigned it a certain interpretation, he can raise the question of whether or not the evoked and interpreted poem is aesthetically good or bad, likeable to unlikeable. However, the reader's judgement of a work is a summary of his "cumulative reponses to the emerging work." This judgement is usually made in the context of the reader's transaction with other texts as well as in the context of the stipulation of his society regarding "the satisfaction to be sought, the conventions to be observed, the qualities to be admired."[21] Thus, the literary judgements that readers pronounce on literary works are not merely groundless opinions, but are based on the system of norms which their societies have inculcated in them. However, this is true not only of literary value judgements; as current axiology informs us, value judgements in general are grounded on specific criteria. The rationale for a normative proposition is seen as a function of the subject's interaction with a certain norm system. Segers has diagrammatically summarized this activity as follows:[22]

Subject + Norm System ⟶ Object ⟷ Normative Proposition

This diagram demonstrates as well that the nature of the normative proposition is not a product of the personal and social norms of the subject only but also of the unique nature of the object. The same holds true for the structure of the literary value judgement which has been constructed by Segers as follows:[23]

Reader + Literary Norm Systems → Text → Literary Value judgement

However, if one were to pay due respect to the role the reader's own idiosyncratic preferences play in constructing value judgements and if one were to recognize the ontological duality of the literary work, the above model would appear as follows:

Reader + Reader's system of literary norms + Social literary norms → [Text / Poem] → Literary judgements

Thus, the term "reader" would stand for the human reader embodying all the non literary experiences he brings with him to the moment of evaluation. These experiences might include such things as his view of the world and his non-literary educational background. However, his personal canon of literary norms would be a reflection of the criteria produced by his space of individuality. It is in detecting these criteria that the help of the psychologist is more than needed. The reader is not just a social "person" judging his experience solely on the basis of social norms - he is more than that. The complex

set of literary norms he brings with him to the event of constructing and evaluating the poem is a manifest interaction of his very personal literary values and those he has acquired in the process of literary socialization.

The problem of the ontological duality of the literary work recognized by Mukarovsky and Rosenblatt also has implications for the theory of literary evaluation.[24] The act of evaluation cannot simply be seen as being performed on the end product of the literary experience, but rather as a final resolution of a process begun right at the inception of the literary experience. Literary evaluation is thus a tying-up-together of several moments of evaluation which take place during the whole time the reader engages in a transactive relationship with the literary text.

However, while according the personal literary norm system its due significance at the theoretical level, in carrying out the empirical study only the social literary norms were investigated. The reason for this being the fact that the reader's system of personal norms is so tied up with the inner terrain of the reader that one felt that without the relevant background in psychology, the investigation of these norms would be crudely done. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of work to be done on the social literary norms. There is need to investigate the mechanisms of norm distribution in terms of the extent to which

they facilitate the individual's acquisition of norms. One can also raise questions about the constituents of the norm systems of various sub-groups of readers.

The sub-group of readers chosen for this study is that of grade twelve high-school students. This is a very interesting group of readers in the sense that they are at the end of a general literary education and about to enter a more specialized literary education at the university. Since the university absorbs very few of these readers, one can safely assume that the majority of the ordinary readers earlier talked about fall within this class of readers. Therefore, if the aim is to understand the manner in which the ordinary reader participates in the consumption of literary works, this sub-group of readers will provide a suitable sample on the basis of which one can generalize about certain aspects of the ordinary or general reader's manner of text-consumption. It is also true, at least theoretically, that by the time a student is in grade twelve, he will have been exposed to a sufficient quantity and quality of literary norms to enable him to pass for a "competent reader." However, A. Popovic has discounted the possibility that high school students can be competent readers.[25] On the basis of his reader-typology, which classifies readers into the categories of: "naive", "sentimental", and "discursive", he has included high school students into the category of sentimental readers.

Popovic's typology reflects a concern for the idea of "aesthetic distance" and he accords greater value to an aesthetic reading performed with maximum "aesthetic distance".[26] It would appear, however, that Popovic's typology is more relevant to the act of interpretation than evaluation. His naive reader is one who identifies the reality of the text with concrete reality, and the sentimental reader is one who identifies his private life with that of the hero. Popovic attaches greater value to the "discursive reader" who, he says, pays attention to all the communicational features of the text. It would seem that Popovic's "discursive reader" is a literary critic with a scientific approach to the aesthetic experience. Certainly, high school students cannot be expected to be as sophisticated as Popovic's "discursive reader". Nonetheless, they can be expected to have acquired the basic ingredients of the literary value system of present-day society. Thus, high school students can qualify as minimal competent readers.

As in other sub-groups of readers there are, among high school students, factors which militate against the uniform distribution of literary values. In this study, "differential curricular emphasis" is being investigated as a factor in the process of distributing literary values. It has been hypothesized that greater literary competence is expected of students at an "academic" school than of

the students at a "trades-oriented" school, since at an "academic" school literature is taught to every student as an "essential component" of the program, whereas it is not taught as such at the "trades-oriented" school". However, the results of the empirical study will confirm or reject the above hypothesis. Meanwhile, the question of how one goes about investigating literary value judgement has to be tackled.

FOOTNOTES

[1] See: S.J. Schmidt, "Receptional Problems with contemporary Narrative Texts and Some of Their Reasons," Poetics, 9, No. 1 (1980), 119-146. R.T. Segers, The Evaluation of Literary Texts, Studies in Semiotics, Vol. 22 (Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press, 1978).

[2] See S.J. Schmidt, "On a Theoretical Basis for a Rational Science of Literature." A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature. (1976), 239-264. In this article Schmidt argues that for literature to be considered a rational science, it must delineate its field of inquiry, determine its metatheoretical framework and devise a sound scientific methodology.

[3] See M. Corti, An Introduction to Literary Semiotics, trans. M. Bogat and A. Mandelbaum, Advances in Semiotics Series, ed. T.A. Sebeok (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. ix.

[4] S.J. Schmidt, "Empirische Literaturwissenschaft as Perspective," Poetics, 8, No. 6 (1979), 562-563.

[5] G. Ferraro and B. Larkin, The Invisible Castle: Institutions: A Concept Study (New York: Macmillan, 1975), p.4

[6] R. Rowbottom, Social Analysis: A Collaborative method of gaining Usable Scientific Knowledge of Social Institutions (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1977), p.25.

[7] Ferraro and Larkin, Op. Cit., p.16

[8] M. Nauman, "Literary Production and Reception," New Literary History, 8, No. 1 (1976), 108

[9] Ibid. p. 108

[10] J. Makarovsky, Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value as Social Facts, trans. M.E. Suino (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970), pp. 1-2.

[11] Ibid. p.28

[12] L.M. Rosenblatt, The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), p.2. In the above work, Rosenblatt takes note of the fact that Romanticism excluded the factor of text-consumption in its definition of literature. The following passage taken from definition 2 of the same book summarizes Rosenblatt's view on the romantic definition of literature.

> ... toward the end of the eighteenth century, the poet, the author, emerges into effulgent visibility. In the post-Lockean philosophic climate, with the warning of confidence in an ordered reality behind the world of appearances, the emphasis shifts to the poet and the poet's sensibility. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge, for example, find the question, what is poetry? practically interchangeable with the question, what is a poet?

[13] For a survey of reception aesthetics, see P.U. Hohendahl, "Introduction to Reception Aesthetics," trans. M. Siberman, New German Critique, 4, No. 10 (1977), 29-63. For the information approach see U. Eco, A Theory of Semiotics Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 33. For the communicational model attributed to Jakobson, see R. Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," in Style in Language, ed. T.A. Sebeok (New York and London: M.I.T. Press and Wiley) 1960, pp. 350-370.

[14] See W. Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," New Literary History, 3, No. 2(1972), 279-299.

[15] In this diagram some of the models have been trimmed of certain features. For example, the concept of "noise" has been left out of Eco's model because it is already subsumed in the concept of Channel. The concern here is with the basic skeleton of the models.

[16] Rosenblatt, Op. Cit.

[17] Ibid., p.12

[18] Ibid., p.12

[19] Ibid., p.133-134

20 Ibid., p.138

21 Ibid., p.152

22 Segers, Op. Cit., p.60

23 Ibid., p.63

24 Rosenblatt, in the work referred to already, divides the literary work into the "text" ie. "signs interpreted as linguistic symbols", and the "poem", the event caused by transaction between a reader and a literary work. However, this duality was anticipated by Mukarovsky in his work already referred to. He divides the literary work into the "artifact" (signifiant) and the "aesthetic object" (signifié). The former is the "material" aspect of the literary work whereas the latter is the "expression and correlate of the artifact in the consciousness of the perceiver" (Mukarovsky op. cit. p.90). See also D.W. Fokkema and E. Kunne-Ibsch, Theories of Literature in the Twentieth Century: Structuralism, Marxism, Aesthetics of Reception, Semiotics (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1978) p.31.

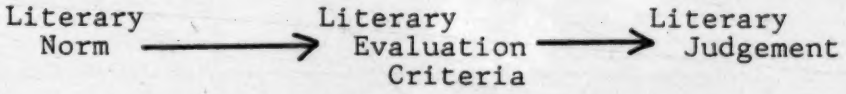
25 Notes the present author took during a conversation with A. Popovic of the Nitra School of Literary Criticism, in Czechoslovakia.

26 The concept of "aesthetic distance" has been postulated as a necessary attitude, on the part of the subject, if the subject is to have an aesthetic experience of the aesthetic object he is interacting with. This concept appears to have its root in Kants' idea of "disinterestedness" or "purposiveness without purpose" as a necessary precondition for a satisfactory aesthetic experience. Bullough, building on the same concepts, has narrowed the concept of "aesthetic distance" to "psychical distance." [See E. Bullough, Aesthetics: Lectures, ed. E.M. Wilkinson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957) pp. 91-130]. Popovic's categorization of readers into naive, sentimental and discursive which rates highly the "detached" reader and lowly the extremely involved reader is in essence championing the concept of "aesthetic distance" or "psychical distance."

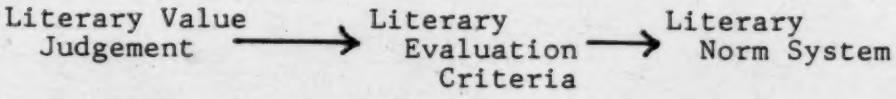
CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

According to Segers, there are two basic approaches to the study of literary values?[1] the deductive and the inductive. The deductive approach involves the construction of the reader's literary value judgement on the basis of his evaluative criteria. However, before deducing the literary value judgement of a reader, the criteria themselves are derived from the reader's explicit norms. The following diagram provided by Segers gives the essence of the deductive model:



The inductive approach, begins with the literary value judgement(s) of a reader from it (them) elicits the literary criteria. From the derived criteria, the researcher then infers the literary values that determine the reader's literary value judgements. Segers has provided the following diagram as a summary of the inductive approach to literary axiology.



Since the aim of this study is to investigate literary value judgements as well as their underlying norm-systems, and since neither the literary value judgements of the readers nor their norms were known prior to the study, the inductive approach was adopted as more suitable. It was proposed, therefore, that the study begin by eliciting the reader's value judgements, from which their norms would later be derived.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The research was designed to answer the following questions:

a) do the literary judgements of students from the two distinct groups of readers differ? (The groups to be looked at are sex and school groups).

b) what literary criteria do they use in judging literature and, specifically, the short story?

c) of the criteria employed, which ones predominantly influence the judgements of:

   i) each group?

   ii) the whole population?

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The design employed in the study is a 2 x 2 x 2 factor design ie:

2 sexes - boys and girls

2 schools - "Trades" and Academic

2 subtests - test A and test B.

Presented diagramatically, the above design appears as follows:

	SUBJECTS		INSTRUMENT	
	BOYS	GIRLS	TEST A	TEST B
SCHOOL A	B1 ... 6	G1 ... 16	Q1.1 ... 20	Q1.1 ... 20
SCHOOL B	B ... 22	G17 ... 22	Q1.1 ... 20	Q1.1 ... 20

TYPES OF SCHOOL

INSTRUMENT

There were two subtests administered, each with 21 questions. The first test consisted of a short story entitled "The Secret in My Engagement Ring" and a questionnaire. "The Secret in My Engagement Ring" by an anonymous writer was taken, by Segers, from True Romance, November 1974, p.7. The second test consisted of the same questionnaire and the short story "Just Lather, That's All" by Hernando Téllez.[2] The Second test was designed to measure the subject's ability to recognize a

short story that belongs, according to current canons, to the belles-lettres. The test was supposed to find out also about the rationalizations for the subject's evaluation of the short story, "Just Lather, That's All."

The first test, on the other hand, was designed to measure the subject's ability to recognize a short story that would not belong, according to current literary canons, to the belles-lettres. This test was also designed to elicit the criteria upon which the short story, "The Secret in My Engagement Ring" was rated. (See Appendix for the full test booklet).

Each test took approximately thirty minutes, thus making the combined testing time approximately 60 minutes.

The test used in the present study had been picked from the Indiana Literary Judgement Test. However, certain modifications were made to the test after a pilot study on first year students taking Comparative Literature 201 at the University of Alberta. Only questionnaire C of the Indiana battery was adopted and the short story, "The Secret in My Engagement Ring". The short story, "Just Lather That's All," was included in the test by the present researcher in consultation with the supervisor and a high school teacher. In some cases the questions in the questionnaire were rephrased for clarity and accessibility to

high school readers.

SUBJECTS

The population for the present study consists of all grade twelve students in Edmonton who attend "trades-oriented" and academic high schools. The sample, however, was obtained from Old Scona (A) Academic High School and Victoria Composite High School (B). Both the schools and the subjects were randomly selected. The population statistics are as follows:

Old Scona - 6 boys, 16 girls

Victoria Composite - 16 boys, 6 girls

Total number for each sex = 22 boys, 22 girls

Total for all subjects = 44.

PROCEDURE

The request to do research in the Edmonton public schools was channeled to the Edmonton School Board through the Field Services office of the University of Alberta. The Board granted the request and sent copies of the permission to the principals of the two schools which had been selected. Each school was requested to provide thirty students. The principals were then contacted by the researcher so that arrangements could be made to administer the tests. It was arranged that the tests be administered in May, 1982.

The first group of students to be tested was that from Scona. The principal asked for thirty volunteers. The volunteers assembled in one classroom. The following week the students at Victoria Composite were tested. The students who took the test were from one class chosen by the Head of the English Department and also those who were free at the time the test was being administered. All the subjects were assembled in one classroom.

In the test room, in both schools, the subjects were seated two at a desk. Once the students were seated, the researcher introduced himself by name and stated what he was doing at the University of Alberta. He told the subjects that he was about to hand out a booklet to them which contained two short stories and questionnaires and that they should record their responses to the two short stories on the questionnaires following the short stories. He further went on to assure the subjects that similar questions had been administered to groups of readers like them and that there were no right and wrong responses - they should record what they really felt about the stories. The subjects were also told that their work was not going to be shown to their teachers and therefore they should not think that the execise would affect their school grades.

The test booklets were then distributed to all the subjects and once each one of them had a copy of the booklet,

the following instructions were given to them:

> Please fill out the cover page of the booklet. Read carefully through the first short story and then complete the questionnaire following it. Do the same for the second short story. Please begin by answering the first part of the questionnaires. Should you have questions please raise your hand and I will come to your desk. You should not discuss anything with your friends. When you have finished, put up your hand and I will come around to pick up your booklet. You can now start working.

After the test had been administered, the subjects were thanked for their patience.

In order to have 22 subjects from each school the researcher randomly picked out 22 test booklets from the 30 booklets obtained from each school.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data was scored by the researcher and key-punched by the key-punching office of the Computing Services of the University of Alberta. Once the data had been entered into the computer, the Statistical Consultants of the Computing Services at the University of Alberta were contracted to analyse the data. The specific statistical computations to which the data was subjected will be presented, together with the results, in the following chapter.

[1] R.T. Segers, The Evaluation of Literary Texts, Studies in Semiotics, Vol. 22 (Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press, 1978). pp. 63-68.

[2] Hernando Téllez's short story is an internationally recognized short story.

[3] Comparative Literature 201 is an introductory course to world masterpieces. This course is usually taken by first year university students. Since the permission to do research amongst high school students had not yet been granted at the time the pilot study was to be carried out it was considered useful to administer the test to the students of Comparative Literature 201. It was thought that these students who had just come to university would provide a sample close enough to the actual sample. The story "Porcupines at the University," by Donald Barthelme which is included in the Indiana battery was discarded because it was not culturally accessible to Canadian students. Some of the questions in the questionnaire which raised problems of the university sample were revised for the high school sample.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the first part of this chapter, the results of the statistical analysis of the data, will be presented and in the second an attempt will be made at interpreting the results.

RESULTS

The data collected were analysed by computing the means of the two schools and sexes on the evaluation of the two short stories; and further analysis was done by using "independent t test" and "analysis of variance" (Anova). Later, an attempt was made, by using correlation matrix, to determine the correlation between overall evaluation and individual criterion. The results obtained are as follows:

Table 1

Means of the two schools on story I
("The Secret in my Engagement Ring")

	School A (Scona)	School B (Victoria)
Mean	4.71	4.30
Standard deviation	1.31	1.03

Table 2

Means for Story II

	School A	School B
Mean	6.09	5.76
Standard deviation	1.07	1.04

Means of the two sexes on story I:

Table 3

	Male	Female
Mean	4.32	4.68
Standard Deviation	0.95	1.36

Means of the two sexes on Story II:

Table 4

	Male	Female
Mean	5.71	6.14
Standard deviation	0.78	1.25

The results for the t test were as follows:

Table 5

Story I between two schools $t=1.12$ $P<0.01$ not significant

Story I between two sexes $t=0.99$ $p<0.01$ not significant

Story II between two schools $t=1.02$ $P<0.01$ not significant

Story II between two sexes $t=1.32$ $P<0.01$ not significant

The results of Anova were as follows:

Table 6

Story I between two schools $F=1.61$ $P<0.01$ not significant

Story I between two sexes $F=2.06$ $P<0.01$ not significant

Story II between two schools $F=1.04$ $P<0.01$ not significant

Story II between two sexes $F=2.53$ $P<0.01$ not significant

Correlation between evaluation and specific criterion for School A (Scona):

Table 7

Question Number	Criteria Represented	Correlation with evaluation of short story	
		I	II
1	Theme	0.60	0.47
2	Setting	0.27	0.69
3	Language	0.77	0.65
4	Plot	0.29	0.62
5	Originality	0.76	0.39
6	Involvement	0.71	0.50
7	Narrative Technique	0.82	0.78
8	Characterization	0.79	0.16
9	Tempo	0.04	0.22
10	Complexity	0.63	0.34
11	Understandability	-0.09	0.63
12	Structure	0.65	0.58
13	Believability	0.75	0.22
14	Imagery	0.53	0.64
15	Content	0.68	0.49
16	Grippingness	0.72	0.53
17	Irony	0.45	0.07
18	Excitement	0.65	0.74
19	Form	0.67	0.68
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.61	0.75

Correlation between evaluation and specific criterion for School B (Victoria)

Table 8

Question Number	Criteria Represented	Correlation with evaluation of Short Story	
		I	II
1	Theme	0.59	0.66
2	Setting	0.02	0.53
3	Language	0.33	0.49
4	Plot	0.46	0.75
5	Originality	0.00	0.66
6	Involvement	0.18	0.40
7	Narrative Technique	-0.09	0.73
8	Characterization	0.65	0.61
9	Tempo	-0.40	0.25
10	Complexity	-0.36	0.46
11	Understandability	0.30	0.46
12	Structure	-0.22	0.49
13	Believability	-0.08	0.73
14	Imagery	0.47	0.50
15	Content	0.32	0.65
16	Grippingness	0.47	0.72
17	Irony	-0.26	0.18
18	Excitement	-0.04	0.79
19	Form	0.12	0.38
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.06	0.25

Correlation between evaluation and Specific criterion for males:

Table 9

Question Number	Criteria Represented	Correlation with evaluation of Short Story	
		I	II
1	Theme	0.60	0.40
2	Setting	0.07	0.28
3	Language	0.47	0.34
4	Plot	0.74	0.40
5	Originality	-0.12	0.27
6	Involvement	-0.08	-0.01
7	Narrative Technique	-0.31	0.53
8	Characterization	0.76	-0.18
9	Tempo	-0.51	-0.17
10	Complexity	-0.55	0.15
11	Understandability	0.71	0.47
12	Structure	-0.14	0.11
13	Believability	-0.05	0.06
14	Imagery	0.28	0.12
15	Content	0.01	0.41
16	Grippingness	0.14	0.48
17	Irony	-0.35	-0.14
18	Excitement	-0.20	0.59
19	Form	-0.17	-0.04
20	Intellectual Challenge	-0.12	-0.16

Correlation between evaluation and specific criterion for the females:

Table 10

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Correlation with evaluation of Short Story	
		I	II
1	Theme	0.64	0.62
2	Setting	0.30	0.67
3	Language	0.57	0.71
4	Plot	0.21	0.79
5	Originality	0.77	0.67
6	Involvement	0.84	0.73
7	Narrative Technique	0.91	0.84
8	Characterization	0.70	0.61
9	Tempo	0.10	0.40
10	Complexity	0.75	0.56
11	Understandability	-0.22	0.69
12	Structure	0.62	0.71
13	Believability	0.63	0.63
14	Imagery	0.71	0.80
15	Content	0.80	0.65
16	Grippingness	0.88	0.69
17	Irony	0.53	0.28
18	Excitement	0.74	0.85
19	Form	0.79	0.72
20	Intellectual challenge	0.69	0.87

Correlation between evaluation and specfic criterion for the whole sample:

Table 11

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Corelation with evaluation of Short Story I	II
1	Theme	0.60	0.57
2	Setting	0.24	0.50
3	Language	0.54	0.57
4	Plot	0.39	0.68
5	Originality	0.39	0.55
6	Involvement	0.51	0.44
7	Narrative Technique	0.45	0.74
8	Characterization	0.70	0.38
9	Tempo	-0.04	0.27
10	Complexity	0.17	0.42
11	Understandability	0.17	0.50
12	Structure	0.38	0.53
13	Believability	0.35	0.46
14	Imagery	0.50	0.57
15	Content	0.53	0.55
16	Grippingness	0.62	0.63
17	Irony	0.16	0.16
18	Excitement	0.33	0.76
19	Form	0.49	0.54
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.39	0.50

The following tables present those criteria which had a negative correlation with overall evaluation of the short stories:

Table 12

Scona

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Negative Correlation with Evaluation of Short Story: I	II
11	Understandability	-0.09	+
	-		+

Table 13

Victoria

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Negative Correlation with Evaluation of Short Story: I	II
7	Narrative Technique	-0.09	+
9	Tempo	-0.40	+
10	Complexity	-0.36	+
12	Structure	-0.22	+
13	Believability	-0.08	+
17	Irony	-0.26	+
18	Excitement	-0.04	+

Table 14

Males

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Negative Correlation with evaluation of Short Story: I	II
5	Originality	-0.12	+
6	Involvement	-0.08	-0.01
7	Narrative Technique	-0.31	+
8	Characterization	+	-0.18
9	Tempo	-0.51	-0.17
10	Complexity	-0.55	+
12	Structure	-0.14	+
13	Believability	-0.05	+
17	Irony	-0.35	-0.14
18	Excitement	-0.20	+
19	Form	-0.17	-0.04
20	Intellectual Challenge	-0.12	-0.16

Table 15

Females

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Negative Correlation with evaluation of Short Story: I	II
11	Understandability	-0.22	+
-	-	+	+

Table 16

Whole Sample

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Negative Correlation with Evaluation of Short Story: I	II
9	Tempo	-0.04	+
	-	+	+

The following tables present the criteria which had a positive correlation with the overall evaluation of the short stories:

Table 17

Scona

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Positive Correlation with Evaluation of Short Story: I	II
1	Theme	0.60	0.47
2	Setting	0.27	0.69
3	Language	0.77	0.65
4	Plot	0.29	0.62
5	Originality	0.76	0.39
6	Involvement	0.71	0.50
7	Narrative Technique	0.82	0.78
8	Characterization	0.79	0.16
9	Tempo	0.04	0.22
10	Complexity	0.63	0.34
11	Understandability	–	0.63
12	Structure	0.65	0.58
13	Believability	0.75	0.22
14	Imagery	0.53	0.64
15	Content	0.68	0.49
16	Grippingness	0.72	0.53
17	Irony	0.45	0.07
18	Excitement	0.65	0.74
19	Form	0.67	0.68
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.61	0.75

Table 18

Victoria

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Positive Correlation with Evaluation of Short Story: I	II
1	Theme	0.59	0.66
2	Setting	0.02	0.53
3	Language	0.33	0.49
4	Plot	0.46	0.75
5	Originality	0.00	0.66
6	Involvement	0.18	0.40
7	Narrative Technique	-	0.73
8	Characterization	0.65	0.61
9	Tempo	-	0.25
10	Complexity	-	0.46
11	Understandability	0.30	0.46
12	Structure	-	0.49
13	Believability	-	0.73
14	Imagery	0.47	0.50
15	Content	0.32	0.65
16	Grippingness	0.47	0.72
17	Irony	-	0.18
18	Excitement	-	0.79
19	Form	0.12	0.38
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.06	0.25

Table 19

Males

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Positive Correlation with Evaluation of Short Story: I	II
1	Theme	0.60	0.40
2	Setting	0.07	0.28
3	Language	0.47	0.34
4	Plot	0.74	0.40
5	Originality	-	0.27
7	Narrative Technique	-	0.53
8	Characterization	0.76	-
10	Complexity	-	0.15
11	Understandability	0.71	0.47
12	Structure	-	0.11
13	Believability	-	0.06
14	Imagery	0.28	0.12
15	Content	0.01	0.41
16	Grippingness	0.14	0.48
18	Excitement	-	0.59

Table 20

Females

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Positive Correlation with Evaluation of Short Story: I	II
1	Theme	0.64	0.62
2	Setting	0.30	0.67
3	Language	0.57	0.71
4	Plot	0.21	0.79
5	Originality	0.77	0.67
6	Involvement	0.84	0.73
7	Narrative Technique	0.91	0.84
8	Characterization	0.70	0.61
9	Tempo	0.10	0.40
10	Complexity	0.75	0.56
11	Understandability	-	0.69
12	Structure	0.62	0.71
13	Believability	0.63	0.63
14	Imagery	0.71	0.80
15	Content	0.80	0.65
16	Grippingness	0.88	0.69
17	Irony	0.53	0.28
18	Excitement	0.74	0.85
19	Form	0.79	0.72
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.69	0.87

Table 21

Whole Sample

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Positive Correlation With Evaluation of Short Story: I	II
1	Theme	0.60	0.57
2	Setting	0.24	0.50
3	Language	0.54	0.57
4	Plot	0.39	0.68
5	Originality	0.39	0.55
6	Involvement	0.51	0.44
7	Narrative Technique	0.45	0.74
8	Characterization	0.70	0.38
9	Tempo	-	0.27
10	Complexity	0.17	0.42
11	Understandability	0.17	0.50
12	Structure	0.33	0.53
13	Believability	0.35	0.46
14	Imagery	0.50	0.57
15	Content	0.53	0.55
16	Grippingness	0.62	0.63
17	Irony	0.16	0.16
18	Excitement	0.33	0.76
19	Form	0.49	0.54
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.39	0.50

The criteria whose correlation with the overall judgement was 0.5 and above were considered as dominant criteria. The following tables present the criteria which had a strong correlation with the overall evaluation of the short stories:

Table 22

Scona

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Strong Correlation with Evaluation of Short Story	
		I	II
1	Theme	0.60	+
2	Setting	+	0.69
3	Language	0.77	0.65
4	Plot	+	0.62
5	Originality	0.76	+
6	Involvement	0.71	0.50
7	Narrative Technique	0.82	0.78
8	Characterization	0.79	+
10	Complexity	0.63	+
11	Understandability	+	0.63
12	Structure	0.65	0.58
13	Believability	0.75	+
14	Imagery	0.53	0.64
15	Content	0.68	+
16	Grippingness	0.72	0.53
18	Excitement	0.65	0.74
19	Form	0.67	0.68
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.61	0.75

Table 23

Victoria

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Strong Correlation with Evaluation of Short Story: I	II
1	Theme	0.59	0.66
2	Setting	+	0.53
4	Plot	+	0.75
5	Originality	+	0.66
7	Narrative Technique	-	0.73
8	Characterization	0.65	0.61
13	Believability	-	0.73
14	Imagery	+	0.50
15	Content	+	0.65
16	Grippingness	+	0.72

Table 24

Males

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Strong Correlation with Evaluation of Short Story: I	II
1	Theme	0.60	+
4	Plot	0.74	+
7	Narrative Technique	-	0.53
8	Characterization	0.76	-
11	Understandability	0.71	+
18	Excitement	-	0.59

Table 25

Females

Question Number	Criterion	Strong Correlation with Evaluation of Short Story: I	II
1	Theme	0.64	0.62
2	Setting	+	0.67
3	Language	0.57	0.71
4	Plot	+	0.79
5	Originality	0.77	0.67
6	Involvement	0.84	0.73
7	Narrative Technique	0.91	0.84
8	Characterization	0.70	0.61
10	Complexity	0.75	0.56
11	Understandability	-	0.69
12	Structure	0.62	0.71
13	Believability	0.63	0.63
14	Imagery	0.71	0.80
15	Content	0.80	0.65
16	Grippingness	0.88	0.69
17	Irony	0.53	+
18	Excitement	0.74	0.85
19	Form	0.79	0.72
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.69	0.87

Table 26

Whole Sample

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Strong Correlation with Evaluation of Short Story: I	II
1	Theme	0.60	0.57
2	Setting	+	0.50
3	Language	0.54	0.57
4	Plot	+	0.68
5	Originality	+	0.55
6	Involvement	0.51	+
7	Narrative Technique	+	0.74
8	Characterization	0.70	+
11	Understandability	+	0.50
12	Structure	+	0.53
14	Imagery	0.50	0.57
15	Content	0.53	0.55
16	Grippingness	0.62	0.63
18	Excitement	+	0.76
19	Form	+	0.54
20	Intellectual Challenge	+	0.50

Table 27

Scona

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Correlation between Criteria and Evaluation for both Stories combined
1	Theme	0.67
2	Setting	0.34
3	Language	0.80
4	Plot	0.47
5	Originality	0.71
6	Involvement	0.68
7	Narrative Technique	0.84
8	Characterization	0.61
9	Tempo	0.13
10	Complexity	0.65
11	Understandability	0.19
12	Structure	0.73
13	Believability	0.53
14	Imagery	0.67
15	Content	0.66
16	Grippingness	0.71
17	Irony	0.40
18	Excitement	0.77
19	Form	0.75
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.75

Table 28

Victoria

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Correlation between Criteria and Evaluation for both stories combined
1	Theme	0.63
2	Setting	0.55
3	Language	0.48
4	Plot	0.64
5	Originality	0.41
6	Involvement	0.47
7	Narrative Technique	0.45
8	Characterization	0.56
9	Tempo	-0.02
10	Complexity	0.25
11	Understandability	0.34
12	Structure	0.40
13	Believability	0.33
14	Imagery	0.61
15	Content	0.59
16	Grippingness	0.62
17	Irony	0.05
18	Excitement	0.55
19	Form	0.44
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.31

Table 29

Males

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Correlation Between Criteria and Evaluation for both stories combined
1	Theme	0.59
2	Setting	0.36
3	Language	0.58
4	Plot	0.60
5	Originality	0.13
6	Involvement	0.29
7	Narrative Technique	0.27
8	Characterization	0.37
9	Tempo	-0.17
10	Complexity	0.03
11	Understandability	0.46
12	Structure	0.25
13	Believability	0.09
14	Imagery	0.41
15	Content	0.42
16	Grippingness	0.42
17	Irony	-0.03
18	Excitement	0.42
19	Form	0.29
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.07

Table 30

Females

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Correlation between Criteria and Evaluation for both stories combined
1	Theme	0.71
2	Setting	0.46
3	Language	0.72
4	Plot	0.54
5	Originality	0.79
6	Involvement	0.81
7	Narrative Technique	0.89
8	Characterization	0.69
9	Tempo	0.19
10	Complexity	0.75
11	Understandability	0.13
12	Structure	0.75
13	Believability	0.64
14	Imagery	0.81
15	Content	0.75
16	Grippingness	0.81
17	Irony	0.46
18	Excitement	0.85
19	Form	0.80
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.83

Table 31

Whole Sample

Question Number	Criterion Represented	Correlation between Criteria and evaluation for both stories combined
1	Theme	0.66
2	Setting	0.42
3	Language	0.66
4	Plot	0.56
5	Originality	0.57
6	Involvement	0.58
7	Narrative Technique	0.67
8	Characterization	0.57
9	Tempo	0.10
10	Complexity	0.47
11	Understandability	0.29
12	Structure	0.58
13	Believability	0.43
14	Imagery	0.64
15	Content	0.62
16	Grippingness	0.67
17	Irony	0.27
18	Excitement	0.67
19	Form	0.63
20	Intellectual Challenge	0.56

DISCUSSION

The Schools

The means of both schools for short story I are not significantly different from each other (see Table 2). This would imply that this short story was accorded the same value rating by both schools.

The relationship between the two means also suggests that the two schools evaluated story I as a homogeneous group rather than as two distinct groups.

The means of both schools for short story II, similarly, are not significantly different from each other (see Table 2). This would imply that this short story was accorded the same value rating by both schools. The relationship between the two means also suggests that the two schools evaluated story II as a homogeneous group rather than as two distinct groups.

It is also noticeable that both schools rated story I lower than story II which implies that both schools do have an aesthetic ability to discriminate appropriately between a short story that belongs to mass literature and one that belongs to the belles-lettres.

The t test statistic comparing the performance of the two schools on story I was not significant which may mean that both schools processed and evaluated story I in a similar manner. (For t test results, see table 5)

The t test statistic comparing the performance of the two schools on story II was not significant, which may imply that the two schools processed and evaluated story II in a similar manner.

The analysis of variance test also showed no significant differences between the performances of the two schools on both story I and story II which would imply that the two groups of students are, in fact similar. (For Anova results see Table 6).

Thus, the initial hypothesis that the two groups of students would differ in their ratings and evaluation of the two short stories has been refuted by the study.

Nevertheless, in terms of the manner in which the two groups employed the criteria in judging the two stories one can detect a few differences. In the evaluation of story I, Scona employed all criteria except "understandability", whereas Victoria employed all except, "narrative technique", "tempo", "complexity", "structure", "believability", "irony" and "excitement" (See Tables 12, 13, 17 and 18). The range of criteria employed by Scona was broader than that employed by Victoria. On the one hand, one can interpret the preceding observation as indicating that the readers from Scona are superior to those from Victoria, since the former's criteria base for the evaluation of the story in question is richer than that of the latter. On the other hand, one might say that the readers

from Victoria responded to the literary code of the story better than the readers from Scona. Having perceived the story as belonging to popular literature, the readers from Victoria considerably reduced the criteria on the basis of which they were going to judge the story, whereas the readers from Scona reduced their criteria very minimally. One does not wish to engage in excessive ad hoc reasoning. However, an attempt will be made to do justice to the findings.

It would appear, therefore, that the readers from Victoria adjusted their criteria in response to the literary code of the story, whereas the readers from Scona more or less used all the criteria available to them. Thus, the differential use of criteria in the evaluation of story I might be explained in terms of the degree to which the two groups responded to the literary code of the story rather than by taking recourse to the literary competence of the two groups.

In the evaluation of story II, both schools employed all the twenty criteria provided. There was an awareness in both groups that story II, which is more sophisticated than story I, demanded a wider range of criteria than story I. It would seem that the readers from Victoria were more aware of the contrast between the two stories than the readers from Scona. If one were to judge literary competence on the basis of the ability to adjust one's system of norms in response to the literary codes of the literary works under evaluation, one would rate the readers from

Victoria as being more competent than those from Scona.

When one compares the number of dominant criteria of the two schools, one gets, more or less, the same picture of the relationship between the two schools. In the evaluation of story I, Scona had more dominant criteria than Victoria. Scona had fifteen dominant criteria while Victoria had only two. This means that the evaluation of story I by readers from Scona was highly influenced and determined by the following fifteen criteria: theme, language, originality, involvement, narrative technique, characterization, complexity, structure, believability, imagery, content, grippingness, excitement, form, and intellectual challenge. The evaluation of story I by readers from Victoria was highly influenced and determined by the two criteria of theme and characterization. The tendency on the part of readers from Victoria to reduce the range of literary norms in the evaluation of story I, is once again visible when one examines the range of dominant criteria. There is still on the part of the readers from Scona a tendency to use a broad range of criteria in the evaluation of story I.

In the evaluation of story II, the readers from Victoria utilized less dominant criteria than the readers from Scona. The readers from Victoria had the following ten dominant criteria: theme, setting, plot, originality, narrative technique, characterization, believability,

imagery, content and grippingness. The readers from Scona employed the following twelve dominant criteria: setting language, plot, involvement, narrative techique, understandability, structure, imagery, grippingness, excitement, form and intellectual challenge. (See tables, 22 and 23).

It is noticeable that the readers from Scona reduced their dominant criteria from fifteen, in the evaluation of story I to twelve, in their evaluation of story II while the readers from Victoria increased their set of dominant criteria by eight in their evaluation of story II. It is obvious that the readers from Victoria were more sensitive to literary class differences between the two stories than the readers from Scona whose strategy for the evaluation of a belle-lettre was narrower than the one they employed in their evaluation of a piece of "trivialiteratur."

A comparison of the norm systems of the two schools as revealed by the correlation between criteria and evaluation, for both stories combined, shows that the readers from Scona utilized all the criteria provided whereas the readers from Victoria excluded the criterion of "tempo" (see Tables 27 and 28). This would, therefore, indicate that the literary norm systems of the two schools are only slightly different. Nevertheless, in terms of highly probable range of criteria as gathered from the dominant criteria of the two norm systems, it would appear that

the two norm systems might in fact be very different. Tables 27 and 28 respectively, record the number of dominant criteria as fifteen for Scona and eight for Victoria. The range of dominant criteria for the norm system of readers from Scona includes theme, language, originality, involvement, narrative technique, characterization, complexity, structure, believability, imagery, content, grippingness, excitement, form and intellectual challenge. The range of dominant criteria for the norm system of the readers from Victoria includes: theme, setting, plot, characterization, imagery, content, grippingness and excitement. However, the differences in the range of dominant criteria of the two literary norm systems may be interpreted as merely indicating differences in the hierarchical structures of two norm systems which are more or less the same.

The Sexes

The means of both sexes for short Story I are not significantly different from each other (see Table 3). This would imply that short story I was accorded the same value rating by both sexes. However, the standard deviations show that the males evaluated the short story as a homogeneous group whereas there was greater diversity of opinion amongst the females.

The means of both sexes for story II are not significantly different from each other either. This would imply that the short story in question was accorded the same

value rating by both the males and females. As in the evaluation of story I, in the evaluation of story II, the females displayed a greater diversity of opinion than the males. (For the means and standard deviations, see Table 4).

The two sexes were also in accord regarding the comparative worth of the two stories. Both sexes rated story I lower than story II, which demonstrates that both sexes do have the aesthetic ability to discriminate appropriately between a short story that belongs to the belles-lettres, and one that belongs to "trivialiteratur."

The t test statistic comparing the performance of the two sexes on story I was not significant which may mean that both sexes processed and evaluated this short story in a similar manner. (For t test results, see Table 5).

The t test statistic comparing the performance of the two sexes on story II was not significant, which may imply that the two sexes processed and evaluated story II in a similar manner.

The analysis of variance test also showed no significant differences between the performances of the two sexes on both story I and II which would imply that the two sexes are, in fact, similar in their aesthetic sensibility. (For Anova results, see Table 6).

However, there are differences between the two sexes in regard to the use of criteria in their evaluations of

the two stories. In the evaluation of story I, the males only employed nine criteria whereas the females employed nineteen criteria. The females excluded "understandability" from the corpus of their literary norm system whereas the males excluded all but the following criteria: theme, setting, language, plot, characterization, understandability, imagery, content, and grippingness.

By reducing the norm system considerably, the male readers seem to have allowed the literary code of the text to influence the composition of their norm system. This does not appear to have been true for the female readers, who employed almost the same norm system in the evaluation of story I as in the evaluation of story II.

In the evaluation of story II, the male readers employed a norm system composed of fourteen criteria whereas the females employed a norm system with twenty criteria. There was a tendency in both sexes to expand their norm systems in their evaluation of story II; however this tendency is more manifest in the male sex than in the female sex. Thus, it would appear that the males were more sensitive to the generic differences between the two stories than the females.

When one compares the number of dominant criteria of the norm system of both sexes for each of the stories, one finds out that the comparison between the two sexes is not as clear cut as the comparison of total norm system would suggest. The number of dominant literary

criteria for the males is reduced from four, in the evaluation of short story I to two, in the evaluation of short story story II, whereas the number of dominant criteria for the females is increased from sixteen, in the evaluation of short story I to eighteen in the evaluation of short story II. The above observation would indicate that males were genre-blind whereas the females were not. Nevertheless, the number of dominant literary criteria is not as relevant to present study as the total norm system on the basis of which the reader evaluates the work of literature.

A comparison of the norm systems of the two sexes as revealed by the correlation between criteria and evaluation, for both stories combined, shows that the females utilized all the twenty criteria provided whereas the males only utilized eighteen criteria. (see Tables 28 and 29). Thus, the two norm systems are, more or less, the same.

Whole Sample

Table 31, shows that the norm system of the whole sample is composed of all the twenty criteria represented in the questionnaire. Thus, one may conclude that high school students in Edmonton are as competent readers as the group of students Segers interviewed at the Universities of Yale and Indiana.

In the following chapter, the conclusions drawn from

the findings discussed in the present chapter will be presented together with some observations on the research implications of the present study.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study was conceived and carried out in the context of the view that literature is a social institution marked by a number of activities which engage its participants. The focus of the present study was on the activity of literary evaluation which is an aspect of the domain of text-consumption. In this chapter an attempt will be made to draw certain general conclusions from the results of the empirical research conducted. In addition to formulating conclusions, research problems which emanate from the present study will be mentioned.

Conclusions

The empirical study conducted suggests the following conclusions:

a) there are no differences between students who attend academic schools and those who attend "trades oriented" schools, in terms of the ability to distinguish popular literature from belles-lettres.

b) the students from the two types of school have a common norm system.

c) the students from the "trades-oriented" type of schools are more sensitive to generic codes than students from the academic type of schools.

d) high school students who attend academic and "trades-oriented" schools are competent readers ie. their norm system is equivalent to that of professional students of literature.

e) sex is not a factor in terms of the high school students' ability to distinguish between a piece of "trivia-literatur" and a work that belongs to the belles-lettres.

f) male and female high school students have a common norm system.

General as the above statements might sound, one must bear in mind that they primarily refer to the student population examined in Edmonton. One would have to be more cautious in applying the results of the present study to other student populations. The present study has not only provided certain insights into the problem of literary evaluation, but also raised certain issues to which future research might address itself.

Implications for Future Research

There are three issues which should be tackled in future research. The question of the relationship between generic codes and literary evaluation should be investigated empirically. Although the present study indicated that differences in the perception of the existence of generic code do not necessarily imply different literary judgements, it would be enlightening if someone dealt

specifically with the whole question of the relationship between generic code and literary evaluation. "Just Lather, that's all," a story used in the present study was, originally, written in Spanish. Since a translation of a work is not aesthetically equivalent to the work itself, it might be interesting to investigate the relationship between literary evaluation and translation. Thirdly, it would be informative if someone undertook to investigate the relationship between "cultural context" and literary evaluation. Apropos, one might raise the question of whether or not works are rated lower or higher in cultural contexts other than those within which they were produced. One hopes that by trying to examine empirically issues as the ones presented above, the fog that surrounds the phenomenon of literary evaluation will gradually dissipate.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire seeks to find out your evaluation of two short stories. The short stories are included in the booklet. After reading each story, please fill out both section 1. and 11. of the questionnaire.

Before reading the short stories and filling out the evaluation sheets, please furnish the following information that might be important for the purposes of the research.

age: _____

sex: _____

school: _____

year in school: _____

community where you live: _____

(This questionnaire is intended for research purposes only, and will in no way be used by your teachers for grading or other purposes.)

Pages 98 to 105 have been removed due to lack of availability of copyright permission. The short story in question, "The Secret in My Engagement Ring" can be found in Segers, op. cit.

EVALUATION SHEET I

1. Over-all Evaluation

Please rate your over-all evaluation of this short story by encircling the appropriate "x".

x x x x x x x

very bad bad good very good

11. Evaluation on the basis of selected criteria

Will you please answer the following twenty questions by encircling the appropriate "x".

1. To what extent does this short story contain a major idea?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately very decidedly

2. To what extent is the historical and geographical setting of the story familiar to you?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately very decidedly

3. Does this short story use language in a skillful way?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately very decidedly

4. To what extent are the events of the story well-organized?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately very decidedly

5. To what extent do you find the story original and refreshing?

x x x x x x x

not at all original | slightly original | moderately original | extremely original

6. To what extent do you feel personal, emotional involvement in the characters and actions of this story?

x x x x x x x

not at all involved | slightly involved | moderately involved | extremely involved

7. To what extent do you find the way the story is told skillful?

x x x x x x x

not at all skillful | slightly skillful | moderately skillful | extremely skillful

8. To what extent do the characters of this short story look like or act like human beings?

x x x x x x x

not at all | slightly | moderately | extremely

9. To what extent does this story move swiftly?

x x x x x x x

very slow | fairly slow | fairly fast | very fast

10. To what extent is this short story complex; or to what extent is this short story simple?

x x x x x x x

very simple | moderately simple | moderately complex | very complex

11. To what extent do you feel that you understand the meaning of the short story?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately thoroughly

12. To what extent does this short story have a good structure with all elements well-integrated?

x x x x x x x

very poorly not very well very well
structured well structured structured structured

13. To what extent do you find this story believable?

x x x x x x x

not at all moderately moderately very
believable unbelievable believable believable

14. To what extent does this short story work through imagery?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately to a very high degree

15. To what extent does the subject matter of this story please you?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately very decidely

16. How steadily does this short story hold your attention?

x x x x x x x

not at all somewhat fairly all the time
steadily steadily

17. To what extent does this short story contain irony?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately extremely

18. To what extent do you find this short story exciting?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately extremely

19. To what extent do you like the formal characteristics (e.g. narrative technique and the prose style) of this short story?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately very much

20. To what extent to you feel this short story offers an intellectual challenge leading you to further analysis or reflection?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately extremely

challenging challenging challenging challenging

Pages 110 to 117 have been removed due to lack of availability of copyright permission. The short story, "Just Lather, That's All" can be found in Great Twentieth Century Spanish Stories.

EVALUATION SHEET II

1. Over-all Evaluation

Please rate your over-all evaluation of this short story by encircling the appropriate "x".

x x x x x x x

very bad bad good very good

11. Evaluation on the basis of selected criteria

Will you please answer the following twenty questions by encircling the appropriate "x".

1. To what extent does this short story contain a major idea?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately very decidedly

2. To what extent is the historical and geographical setting of the story familiar to you?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately very decidedly

3. Does this short story use language in a skillful way?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately very decidedly

4. To what extent are the events of the story well-organized?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately very decidedly

5. To what extent do you find the story original and refreshing?

x x x x x x x

not at all original | slightly original | moderately original | extremely original

6. To what extent do you feel personal, emotional involvement in the characters and actions of this story?

x x x x x x x

not at all involved | slightly involved | moderately involved | extremely involved

7. To what extent do you find the way the story is told skillful?

x x x x x x x

not at all skillful | slightly skillful | moderately skillful | extremely skillful

8. To what extent do the characters of this short story look like or act like human beings?

x x x x x x x

not at all | slightly | moderately | extremely

9. To what extent does this story move swiftly?

x x x x x x x

very slow | fairly slow | fairly fast | very fast

10. To what extent is this short story complex; or to what extent is this short story simple?

x x x x x x x

very simple | moderately simple | moderately complex | very complex

11. To what extent do you feel that you understand the meaning of the short story?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately thoroughly

12. To what extent does this short story have a good structure with all elements well-integrated?

x x x x x x x

very poorly not very well very well
structured well structured structured structured

13. To what extent do you find this story believable?

x x x x x x x

not at all moderately moderately very
believable unbelievable believable believable

14. To what extent does this short story work through imagery?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately to a very high degree

15. To what extent does the subject matter of this story please you?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately very decidely

16. How steadily does this short story hold your attention?

x x x x x x x

not at all somewhat fairly all the time
steadily steadily

17. To what extent does this short story contain irony?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately extremely

18. To what extent do you find this short story exciting?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately extremely

19. To what extent do you like the formal characteristics (e.g. narrative technique and the prose style) of this short story?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately very much

20. To what extent to you feel this short story offers an intellectual challenge leading you to further analysis or reflection?

x x x x x x x

not at all slightly moderately extremely

challenging challenging challenging challenging